Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The situation on the ground remains fluid. In addition to the measles epidemic, a rise in the number of AWD cases was reported in Kabul and surrounding areas, adding new emergency needs to an already escalating crisis. An analysis revealed that the proportion of both moderate acute malnutrition and severe acute malnutrition are rising monthly, with four of every 100 children screened, diagnosed with SAM.

Households previously displaced by conflict continued to return to their areas of origin. Over 14,000 households were reported to have returned in Hilmand province alone. Families that have returned report urgent humanitarian needs as property, farmland and facilities have been destroyed due to conflict. Services in areas of return are scarce as hospitals and health facilities face significant shortages in critical supplies and staff. While commercial airlines on hold, the Pakistan border crossings remained open for those with valid travel documents and visas, however the Pakistan government stated they cannot take any more refugees.

Summary Analysis of Programme Response

Health

The uncertainty around the funding of the SEHATMANDI project continues to affect delivery of lifesaving health and nutrition services across the country as much of the health system is non-functioning. While UNICEF continued to engage in high-level advocacy to sustain the gains made in health, extensive efforts were put to scale up the response to the spread of communicable diseases. Measles cases continue to increase and spread across the country, affecting...
children under five years old the most. Current hotspot zones are in the southern region. UNICEF and partners are planning a nationwide integrated measles, polio and Vitamin A campaign beginning in hotspot areas.

Concurrently there is an alarming increase in AWD cases reported, with laboratory confirmation of cholera for two cases. A National Taskforce for AWD/cholera is currently in place, and UNICEF is preparing an integrated AWD/cholera response plan, which includes health, WASH, nutrition, education, and child protection response activities.

20,000 women and children were reached with health interventions through the support (fuel, medicine and basic equipment) provided to the regional and provincial hospitals in the eastern part of the country. In addition, more than 10,000 women and children, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), benefited from the provision of healthcare services through 57 mobile teams across 2,000 service delivery points in 14 provinces. During the reporting period, 176,124 individuals received the COVID-19 vaccine. Efforts are underway to scale up the number of mobile health and nutrition teams from 57 to approximately 110.

**Nutrition**

During the reporting period, an estimated 7,000 children under-five with Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) were provided with lifesaving therapeutic treatment through the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) at health facilities and mobile teams across the country. However, this figure is significantly lower than expected due to continued disruptions in service.

As part of the ongoing scale-up to address the shortfall in services, the UNICEF plans to deploy nearly 110 integrated mobile teams in the next quarter. UNICEF is also in the process of doubling the number of nutrition extenders in the field to further support, coordinate and monitor the nutrition response.

The Nutrition Cluster conducted a stocktaking exercise which reported that 168 active Mobile Health and Nutrition Teams have been deployed by 24 implementing partners in hard-to-reach areas across 139 districts. This information will be used to conduct a gap analysis and develop operational plans to cover lifesaving needs.

**Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence and PSEA**

UNICEF continues to respond to urgent and lifesaving child protection needs. During the reporting period, a total of 10,830 children (5,895 boys and 4,935 girls) affected by conflict and displacement were reached with critical services. More than 9,798 children (5,291 boys and 4,507 girls) were reached with recreational interventions, psychosocial support services and/or provided with essential referrals. UNICEF assessed the needs of 879 children (461 boys and 418 girls) in north, northeast, south, east, and west regions through the case management system and provided with immediate child protection services, including emergency cash assistance to 57 children (47 boys and 10 girls). Despite the ongoing delays of cash-based programming due to disruptions in the banking sector, registration of vulnerable families continued. Over 300 out of 900 targeted families were registered and will receive cash assistance to support their immediate needs. The scale-up plan includes providing assistance to more than 2,000 household’s next quarter.

As more people return to their homes of origin and/or areas previously inaccessible, it is imperative that Explosive Ordnance Risks Education (EORE) is scaled up to prevent serious injury or death. A total of 1,203 individuals (454 boys, 407 girls, 317 men and 25 women) were reached through UNICEF and its partners with key awareness messages. In addition, a total of 222 persons (40 boys, 17 girls, 10 men and 155 women) were reached with Gender-Based violence (GBV) response, prevention and risk mitigation services.

As part of the scale-up, a series of Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) orientations were provided for implementing partners, suppliers and third-party contractors. 14 females and 30 males drawn from over 28 active UNICEF implementing partners were oriented on SEA prevention and new reporting mechanisms for SEA. The training
aimed to strengthen their capacities to integrate SEA in their humanitarian responses. In addition, using the U-report Chat box, UNICEF reached 500 people with information on PSEA, including where to report SEA.

**Education**

During the reporting period, UNICEF and implementing partners enrolled 77,804 out-of-school children (23,532 girls and 54,272 boys) in 2,400 newly established Community Based Education classes. In addition, 656 handwashing stations were installed in 428 schools (1-2 handwashing stations per school depending on the school size) in Badakhshan, Ghor and Wardak provinces. As of beginning of the September, both girls and boys have been allowed to attended primary school, but there were no directives on secondary schools. As a result, accelerated Learning Centres (ALCs) that target adolescent girls and boys, as well as the UNICEF supported classes remained closed, awaiting clear guidelines from the Taliban authorities.

**WASH**

A total of 108,391 people accessed safe drinking water, including 93,000 people in Balkh and Nimroz provinces through emergency water trucking services. 54,429 people, including returnees from Pakistan, those displaced by conflict, and in slum areas, accessed essential hygiene supplies and benefited from hygiene promotion. 2,226 people accessed sanitation facilities/services. Reports of AWD will further trigger a scale-up of interventions in key locations.

A WASH Cluster “Water Supply in Drought and Emergency” online training began on September 15th which recorded 110 individual registrations from 37 organizations. The course aims to promote pragmatic solutions facing the current exceptional water scarcity crisis, in two sessions per week for one month. The training is conducted in the local language by DACAAR, an international NGO, with UNICEF support. As of mid-September, the WASH Cluster has selected eight WASH project proposals, totalling $4,86 million targeting more than 200,000 vulnerable people in 16 provinces for the AHF 3rd Reserve Allocation.

**Social Protection and Cash Transfers**

UNICEF continued the scale up of cash assistance to meet critical humanitarian needs in Central, Western, and Southern Regions. Preparations for a new registration exercise took place. 1,750 households in the Western Region and 1,000 households in two districts in Samangan are going to be registered by the end of the month. Cash distribution using Money Service Providers (MSP) is expected to start in Kabul in the next few weeks. This will target households with children on the street to offset deepening humanitarian needs amongst an already vulnerable population. Liquidity remains a challenge in the new operating environment, but through establishing new contracts with new financial service providers, UNICEF continued to plan for a significant scale-up of cash assistance.

**Communications for Development (C4D), Community Engagement, and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP)**

Amidst the political upheaval, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a back seat in the media with only 16 mentions during the reporting period. UNICEF engaged 21,380 community members with COVID-19 risk communication and COVID-19 vaccination. UNICEF provided information on COVID-19 prevention measures, COVID-19 vaccination and where to access services. Concerns and questions regarding rumours about vaccines and their side effects were responded through social mobilizers, distribution of Information Education Communication (IEC) materials, 15 Radio/TV programs and round table discussions.

A survey began through U-Report to seek feedback from the community on needs and awareness on where to seek assistance during this period of uncertainty. As of Sept 15th, 125,278 people have participated. The number of participants continued to increase daily. The poll will be completed by the end of the month and the information will be analysed for targeted humanitarian response. Responses to questions are being provided directly through the U-report system.
Gender and Adolescent Development and Participation

Most of UNICEF-supported female-led Community Service Organisations (CSOs), who offer targeted services, including GBV prevention and response, for women and girls, are experiencing operational challenges in various provinces across the country. During the reporting period, UNICEF and partners:

- established four Girls Safe Spaces (GSSs) in Kandahar city and Daman districts.
- established two GSSs were established in Karokh and Injil districts, Herat Province.
- conducted validation of and orientation for 20 partners implementing youth and GBV related activities on how to apply adolescent girl lens in service provision, including in emergencies, by using the draft adolescent girls tool kit

Human Interest Stories and External Media

The Communication and Advocacy section at UNICEF Afghanistan continued highlighting the impact of the triple crisis of instability, drought and COVID-19 on children in Afghanistan and positioning UNICEF as a credible voice speaking on behalf of children from inside the country. To date, around 120 TV/radio interviews, background briefings and newspaper articles were supported and conducted. Including a lead story on Al-Jazeera highlighting the health and nutrition crisis facing children in Afghanistan.

At Shahrak-Sabz IDP settlement in Herat city, UNICEF and its partner continued to provide recreational activities and psychosocial support through fixed and mobile Child-Friendly Spaces (CFSs). Through four static CFSs, children engaged in recreational activities, basic literacy and numeracy learning, and physical activities. More than 360 children in the IDP settlement took part in these activities.

In Jebrail district, Herat, a member of the UNICEF-supported Community Based Child Protection Committees talked to parents and children about COVID-19 prevention methods.

UNICEF established 16 community-based child protection committees in Herat province, 10 of them in Shahrak-Sabz IDP settlement and 6 in Jebrail district. Half of these committees are led by women.

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